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Article

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Organization Management Journal (OMJ)

Provided in Cooperation with:

Eastern Academy of Management (EAM) and Southwest Academy of Management (SWAM)

Suggested Citation: Yawson, Robert M. (2022) : Editorial: The future of work and becoming an employer of choice, Organization Management Journal (OMJ), ISSN 1541-6518, Emerald, Leeds, Vol. 19, Iss. 3, pp. 86-87,
<https://doi.org/10.1108/OMJ-05-2022-970>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/338167>

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Editorial: The future of work and becoming an employer of choice

The future of work will require strategic flexibility regarding the whole meaning of work, work policies in terms of changing demographics, sociotechnical issues, new work patterns and new office designs. All these will be geared towards enhancing the employee experience. There is a dramatic shift from emphasizing customer experience to employee experience. It is now almost universally acknowledged that employee experience translates to customer experience. The future of work will demand organizations to become an employer of choice.

Being an employer of choice has important implications for organizations seeking the most highly qualified talents and recognizing that employee experience translates to satisfactory customer interaction, brand loyalty and business performance. The old employee engagement paradigm is not the paradigm for the future of work and becoming an employer of choice. Instead, organizational leaders must foster a culture that enhances the holistic employee experience in the new world of work.

In this issue of the *Organization Management Journal*, three interesting articles discuss some of the critical issues related to the future of work. Jestine Phillips, in the article “A perspective on embracing emerging technologies research for organizational behavior,” discusses how “emerging technologies are capable of enhancing organizational- and individual-level outcomes” (Philip, 2022). The study provides a construct to encourage data-driven phenomena in the sociotechnical space where organizations exist. “The future of work, driven by more automation and technology in what has been described as the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution,’ was always coming. COVID-19 has hastened the pace” (Yawson, 2020). In line with this, Jestine Phillips identifies a boundary condition in the methodological application of AI technologies in organizations – an aspect of the future of work.

In their article, “Sexual identity management of working lesbian women,” Kristine Khachatryan and co-authors touch on one of the critical determinants of the future of work. Changing demographics requires organizations to be strategically flexible. The authors use the method of multiple correspondence analysis to “examine the relationships between several diversity-related measures of the company and being out at the workplace” (Khachatryan *et al.*, 2022). The authors explain that diversity and inclusion measures contribute to employee well-being and are seen in the higher life satisfaction of “out” women and are, at the very least evident in their work performance. These are essential attributes of an employer of choice. The study concludes that being “out” at work is subject to a complex interplay of several factors, manifesting in an organization’s diversity management approach and work culture.

In their article, “How long are newcomers new in different occupations?”, Johnna Capitano and the co-authors take on one of the most critical issues in reimagining the future of work. Organizations need to be an employer of choice to retain talents. The “findings provide relevant information to inform practitioner designs of new employee onboarding



programs” (Capitano *et al.*, 2022). How do you successfully onboard a remote or hybrid worker? How do you successfully manage the onboarding of these different categories of workers to retain talents and enhance performance? How do your onboarding practices make you an employer of choice? These are questions leaders will grapple with in the future work.

Organizational leaders have an opportunity to shape the future of work by developing a systemic alignment framework. This systemic alignment should include the organization’s purpose, workforce strategy, locating and designing physical and virtual works spaces that enhance excellent employee experience and using emerging technologies to be strategically flexible and respond in real-time. Ultimately, the future of work will depend on how you foster the employee experience by becoming an employer of choice.

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